



News Release

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West Nile virus: Washington has three new confirmed human cases

Benton, Yakima, Klickitat cases bring state's total for year to 13

OLYMPIA — Three more cases of West Nile virus have been confirmed in Washington. That brings the total to 13 people infected here this year. Before this year, 2008's three cases had been the state's highest annual figure since the Washington State Department of Health began tracking the virus in 2001.

All three cases are in people who live in Eastern Washington. They are a Yakima County man in his 60s, a Klickitat County man in his 40s, and a Benton County man in his 40s. The Yakima County and Klickitat County men were hospitalized. The Benton County man was not.

This year's 13 cases have all been in people who were exposed in Eastern Washington. No deaths have been reported.

Although summer is nearly over, West Nile virus season won't end until colder weather arrives and stops mosquito activity for the year. Typically, the virus is spread to people by mosquitoes who feed on infected birds. In addition to people, infected birds, horses and mosquito pools have been found in Washington this year.

The best protection against West Nile is to avoid mosquito bites. Windows and screens should be tight. People should try to stay inside at dusk and dawn. Long sleeves and trousers reduce the amount of skin that can be bitten. Effective mosquito repellents ward off the insects.

Mosquitoes thrive in standing water. Clean out gutters, dump water out of outdoor containers, keep water fresh in birdbaths and fountains, and fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers.

While West Nile virus won't sicken most people who are infected, it can produce symptoms ranging from mild to severe. Symptoms may include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor,

disorientation, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and coma. In rare cases, it can be fatal. People with symptoms should contact a health care provider.

Detailed information is on the Department of Health's [West Nile virus](#) page. People may [report dead birds](#) online.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at http://www.doh.wa.gov for <i>a healthy dose of information</i> .
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